

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 16 July 2019
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 9.55 pm
Members Present:	Councillors M Sartin (Chairman) R Jennings (Vice-Chairman) R Baldwin, P Bolton, L Burrows, S Heather, Y Knight, G Mohindra, S Murray, S Neville, S Rackham, P Stalker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley		
Other Councillors:	Councillors C McCredie, J Philip, S Stavrou, D Stocker, C Whitbread and H Whitbread		
Apologies:	Councillors D Dorrell and R Morgan		
Officers Present:	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), J Chandler (Service Director (Community & Partnership Services)), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), D Marsh (Waste and Recycling Manager), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager) and G Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer)		

13. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

14. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that Councillor Morgan had been appointed as a substitute for Councillor Dorrell, but Councillor Morgan had subsequently given his apologies for the meeting.

15. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from the Members present pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee noted that there had been no public questions or requests to address the Committee received.

18. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN

The Committee noted that there had been no executive decisions called in for consideration since the last meeting.

19. CABINET BUSINESS

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Executive's current Programme of Key Decisions for the Committee to consider.

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that the standard report for this item had been revised to reflect the requirements of the Constitution, and the definition of a Key Decision from Article 14 of the Constitution had also been included for the benefit of the Committee.

Leader Portfolio

Councillor Murray urged the Leader of Council to include all the Epping District Councillors for the St John's Road Development, to encourage good decision making. The Leader stated that a Working Group had been appointed for the St John's Road Project, which included both Town and District Councillors, as well as members of the Cabinet. The Leader acknowledged that there were no members of the Liberal Democrat group on the Working Group, but there would be regular progress reports on the project submitted to the Cabinet and the Council.

Councillor Murray responded that it would be useful to have the whole range of opinions on the Working Group, and opined that there had been problems caused in Loughton by not having Councillors from the Loughton Residents Association on Working Groups.

Contract & Technical Services Portfolio

Councillor Jennings enquired as to whether the Vere Road Car Park item should be listed, as it was recorded as not being a Key Decision? The Leader replied that he would find out the status of this item and report back to the Councillor. Councillor Murray requested that local District Council Members be included, and their views considered for the Vere Road Car Park item.

Housing & Property Services Portfolio

Councillor Murray thanked the new Portfolio Holder for replying this morning to the important questions concerning the Fire Safety Policy that the Councillor had raised in respect of the Oakwood Hill Estate. Councillor Murray also felt that it was imperative that there was some Scrutiny involvement in the Options Appraisal for the Future Delivery of the Council's Responsive Repairs Service, and the Service Company and Development Company items, as both items marked a significant change of direction for the Council. The Leader reassured the Committee that Scrutiny involvement in the Service Company and Development Company in particular, was being considered as this was a momentous change for the Council.

The Housing & Property Services Portfolio Holder confirmed that the new Action Plan for the Housing Strategy 2018 was currently out for consultation.

Councillor Knight enquired about the item regarding the development potential of the Council's Sheltered Housing Assets, and pointed out that it would be the Stronger Communities Select Committee which would be reporting on this item, not the

Communities Select Committee as listed. The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council needed to have a discussion on the future of its sheltered housing assets, looking at different options, and the Select Committee would be a good place to start this discussion. Councillor Knight stated that the Select Committee was informed a year ago that there was a dire need for sheltered housing within the District, but the Portfolio Holder reassured the Committee that the Council was looking at how to best utilise its sheltered housing assets as part of the Council's provision of affordable housing, not developing and selling off the current assets. Councillor J H Whitehouse requested that the report on Sheltered Housing should contain evidence on the current situation when it was considered by the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

The Service Director for Communities & Partnerships informed the Committee that the Council's current Sheltered Housing accommodation was mainly bedsits and not fit for purpose. The Council needed to make its sheltered housing more attractive and relevant for residents. Councillor Wixley requested that there should be scope for residents to move to more independent accommodation if they found that they had entered sheltered housing too early. The Leader elucidated that there were different levels of sheltered housing available, and it would depend on the individual's needs. The review was intended to ensure that the Council's stock of sheltered housing was relevant for residents.

Customer Services

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the item for the District Electoral Review referred to a boundary review, which would examine the ward boundaries, and was an objective for the current year in the Corporate Plan. However, the Leader added that the District Electoral Review had been removed from the Corporate Plan until the Local Plan process was complete, and therefore this item should not have been listed on the Key Decision List.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Executive Programme of Key Decisions be noted; and
- (2) That no appropriate matters were identified for addition to the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme and overview of specific decisions proposed to be taken, save for the involvement of the Stronger Communities Select Committee in the review of the Council's Sheltered Housing Assets.

20. STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY IN LOCAL & COMBINED AUTHORITIES

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report on the Statutory Guidance on Overview & Scrutiny in Local & Combined Authorities, that had been issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in May 2019.

The Committee was informed that Local Authorities '*must have regard to the guidance when exercising overview and scrutiny functions*' which meant that the guidance should be followed unless there was good reason not to. There were six themes running throughout the guidance, which were: Culture; Resourcing; Selecting Committee Members; Power to Access Information; Planning Work; and Evidence Sessions. The Democratic Services Manager then proceeded to highlight the key points for each theme within the guidance.

Culture

Organisational culture within local authorities was recognised as one of the key measures of success for Overview & Scrutiny, with an emphasis placed on the importance of Overview & Scrutiny being owned and led by Members.

Resourcing

The guidance did not prescribe a specific level of Officer support to be allocated to Overview & Scrutiny, other than an appropriate level of support to enable Overview & Scrutiny to function effectively. Any support should also include the way that the wider Council engaged with Overview & Scrutiny.

Selecting Committee Members

When selecting Members to serve on Overview & Scrutiny Committees, consideration should be given to experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve. The importance of the role of Chairman for Overview & Scrutiny Committees was recognised, with a suggestion that they should be selected by means of a secret ballot. The guidance also emphasised the value of outside expertise that could be obtained by co-opted members onto a Committee or the use of technical advisors.

Power to Access Information

The guidance highlighted the legal powers which already existed for Overview & Scrutiny to access information to enable it to carry out its work. This included access to data on finance, performance and risk.

Planning Work

The guidance stressed the importance of work programming to the success of Overview & Scrutiny, with a focus on items which could make a tangible difference. A variety of sources should be used to inform the work programme, and the use of shortlisting was recommended in deciding which topics should be included in the work programme. There also needed to be co-ordination across the work programmes of individual Scrutiny Committees, to ensure that the best use was made of the available support.

Evidence Sessions

Evidence Sessions were highlighted as a key means for Overview & Scrutiny Committees to inform their work, but they required effective planning. In developing recommendations from Evidence Sessions, a maximum of six to eight recommendations was suggested as being sufficient to ensure a focused response was received.

The Democratic Services Manager requested the Committee to consider the statutory guidance and to identify whether any changes to current processes were required as a result.

Councillor Mohindra stated that the guidance on Evidence Sessions sounded interesting, and inquired whether there had been any benchmarking or peer reviews of the Council's Scrutiny function? The Democratic Services Manager responded that the Council did undertake benchmarking exercises for different service areas against other Councils when it was appropriate to do so. The last corporate peer review had

probably been 15 years or more ago, in relation to the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Councillor Mohindra suggested that a peer review of the Council's Scrutiny function could be a useful exercise.

Councillor Knight queried whether any of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees had ever had a co-opted member, and whether the Council was actively pursuing this. The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services informed the Committee that there had been a member of the Tenants & Leaseholders Federation co-opted onto the Communities Select Committee in the past, and the Portfolio Holder tried to include them where possible, but housing issues were dealt with by three different Committees. The Democratic Services Manager added that this individual was a formally co-opted member of the Communities Select Committee, but this was an issue for each Select Committee to consider. Councillor Knight followed up by inquiring whether the possibility of being a co-opted member of a Scrutiny Committee could be advertised to the public as it could be beneficial to have more co-opted members. The Chairman opined that co-opted members probably worked better for the Select Committees than for the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and the Democratic Services Manager stated that he would advise the Committee on the procedure to follow for appointing co-opted members.

Councillor J H Whitehouse advocated that there should only be two or three substantive items on each Scrutiny agenda so that each item could be examined in more detail; this was also the advice from the Member Scrutiny training held in June 2019. The Councillor also felt that the report should be put forward to the Constitution Working Group for further consideration. However, the Democratic Services Manager advised the Member that there was not a great deal in the Guidance for consideration by the Constitution Working Group, unless Members wished to amend the Overview & Scrutiny rules in Article 6 of the Constitution. Councillor J H Whitehouse then enquired as to how Members could decide on their agenda? The Democratic Services Manager stated that each Select Committee had a Lead Officer at Leadership Team Level to discuss their work programmes with, and there was a bi-annual meeting of all the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen. The Chairman added that each Select Committee had the opportunity to discuss their own work programme throughout the municipal year.

Councillor Murray felt that this was an excellent report, and requested that the Joint Meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen should consider if anything within the statutory guidance should be implemented by the Council. Councillor Murray did highlight one issue within the Guidance – the selection of Committee members – as he felt that the Council was not keeping to the spirit of the guidance.

The Democratic Services Manager reiterated that, apart from selecting the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee by secret ballot, any other changes prompted from the guidance could be achieved within the existing Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Statutory Guidance on Overview & Scrutiny in Local & Combined Authorities recently published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government be noted; and
- (2) That the Statutory Guidance be considered by the Joint Meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen at its meeting scheduled for 12 September 2019 to identify any potential beneficial changes to current procedures.

21. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP 2019/20

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report regarding the membership of the Select Committees in 2019/20. The Committee were reminded that it had confirmed the appointments of Members to the Select Committees at its last meeting. However, there had been a couple of issues to further resolve.

Firstly, there had been an error in the reporting of the nominations made by the Loughton Residents Association (LRA), in that the nominations for the Stronger Council and Stronger Place Select Committees had been transposed. It was felt that this error had not affected the decision of the Committee and the first cycle of meetings had proceeded in accordance with the nominated submissions of the LRA. However, the Committee was requested to clarify the correct appointments.

Secondly, one nomination of the Conservative Group for the Stronger Council Select Committee had been outstanding. The Leader of the Conservative Group had subsequently advised that Councillor H Brady should be appointed to this Select Committee, and the Committee was requested to ratify this appointment.

Resolved:

- (1) That the appointment of Councillor H Brady to membership of the Stronger Council Select Committee for 2019/20 be noted; and
- (2) That the corrected appointment of members of the Loughton Residents Association Group to membership of the Stronger Council and Stronger Place Select Committees be noted.

22. WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK & FINISH PANEL

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report on the proposed Waste Management Task & Finish Panel.

The Committee was reminded that it had agreed to establish a Waste Management Task & Finish Panel at its last meeting on 4 June 2019, to support the forthcoming review of the Council's waste & recycling service. The Committee had to now agree the Terms of Reference, Membership and work programme for the Panel.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that six members had expressed an interest in being a member of the Panel prior to the meeting. A further three members expressed an interest at the meeting, bringing the total to nine. The rules regarding membership of Task & Finish Panels were flexible, save that more than one political group had to be represented and any Cabinet Member whose Portfolio was directly affected by the Panel's Terms of Reference could not be a member either. The nine members interested in being a member of the Panel satisfied these requirements. It was also incumbent on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that the Panel would need to work quickly to ensure that its findings were considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2020. The Waste & Recycling Manager introduced the proposed Terms of Reference for the Panel and drew the Committee's attention to the six items proposed for the panel's consideration. It was acknowledged that some of the items had been previously discussed by the Council, such as the

introduction of a third wheeled bin, and the Committee was reminded that they were at liberty to add or remove items from the list as they saw fit.

Councillor Wixley raised an issue concerning the frequency that litter bins were emptied, as the Councillor continually saw the same litter bins full and overflowing. Councillor Wixley felt that this was a key issue as he spent an inordinate amount of his Councillor time reporting bins that needed emptying. Councillor Neville and Councillor Rackham supported Councillor Wixley's comments, and Councillor Rackham highlighted that litter bins were used more during the summer, hence they required emptying more often. Councillor Rackham also enquired why there were not more dog waste bins being established throughout the District? The Waste & Recycling Manager acknowledged that there had been an increased use of litter bins, which created problems in some areas, and there was a seasonal issue with the use of some litter bins as well – especially during the school summer holidays. The Council had ceased putting out separate dog waste bins as bagged dog waste was now permitted to be disposed of in normal litter bins.

Councillor Neville and Councillor Murray supported the proposed review of street cleansing arrangements to effect improvements, and Councillor Neville suggested that bottle deposit schemes should be added to the Terms of Reference for the Panel as there was a Government consultation currently being undertaken on this subject; this was agreed by the Committee. Councillor Murray complimented the Waste & Recycling Manager on his helpfulness and support whenever a waste management issue was reported by the Councillor.

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that a full list of dates for meetings of the Panel would be circulated as soon as they were agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That the draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Waste Management Task & Finish Panel for 2019/20 be agreed, subject to the addition of Bottle Deposit Schemes;

(2) That the following appointments to the Waste Management Task & Finish Panel be made for the remainder of the municipal year:

- (a) Councillor Burrows;
- (b) Councillor McCredie;
- (c) Councillor Morgan;
- (d) Councillor Neville;
- (e) Councillor C C Pond;
- (f) Councillor S Rackham;
- (g) Councillor M Sartin;
- (h) Councillor J H Whitehouse; and
- (i) Councillor Wixley;

(3) That Councillor L Burrows be appointed Chairman of the Waste Management Task & Finish Panel for the 2019/20 municipal year; and

(4) That Councillor S Rackham be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Waste Management Task & Finish Panel for the 2019/20 municipal year.

23. CORPORATE PLAN ACTION PLAN YEAR 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Service Director for Community & Partnerships presented the Corporate Plan Action Plan Year 2 Performance Report.

The Service Director reminded the Committee that the Action Plan was a mechanism for reporting to Members on the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and key programmes of work, which highlighted the Council's overall performance against the agreed objectives in the Corporate Plan. The Performance Measures for Year 2 of the Corporate Plan had been streamlined to enable improved focus on how the Corporate Objectives were being met. Some suggestions for improvements to the report had been made at the meeting of the Stronger Council Select Committee, held on 9 July 2019, and quarterly milestones were intended to be added for all the listed key programmes.

The Service Director provided some updates to the report, following its publication on the agenda:

- For the '**Increased Customer Satisfaction**' KPI, the overall target was listed as 67% but the Council had already achieved 73.4% in Quarter 1; this target had now been revised upwards to 75%.
- For the '**Improved Customer First Contact**' KPI, quarterly figures and targets would be implemented, not quarterly updates.
- For the '**Increase new Leisure Centre Attendees year on year**' KPI, the target for the first quarter was 65,000 but 200,086 had been achieved. This figure was not new Leisure Centre Members as stated in the description but total attendances at the Council's Leisure Centres. New KPIs would be set up for this area to give Members an idea of the number of new Leisure Centre members, users of the gymnasiums, users of the swimming pools etc, which would give a better indication of any trends in Leisure Centre usage.
- Corporate Objective 7, '**Keeping the District Safe**', was showing a status of Red but all the self-generated actions had been completed; it was only the joint actions with Essex Police which were still outstanding which subsequently adversely impacted this Objective.
- For the '**Partnership Working Programme**', it had been suggested by the Stronger Council Select Committee that this programme should be removed from the report as it could mean any number of different things and was difficult to measure.

Councillor Murray felt that an initial target of 67% for customer satisfaction was quite low and the Council should be aiming for 80% at least. The Leader of Council stated that the Council's customer satisfaction rating was actually quite high but reiterated that the indicator would be reviewed. Councillor Philip felt that a more complicated score should be considered for this indicator rather than the simple customer satisfaction rating. The Service Director undertook to feed these views back to the Service Director for Customer Service. Councillor Wixley commented that the revised

target of 75% was based on the number of people who had actually answered the survey, and enquired how many people did not answer the survey? The Service Director responded that she would have to liaise with the relevant Officer to obtain that figure and report back to Members.

Councillor Neville asked about the '**Delivery of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy**' programme, as there was no information other than all its targets had been met to date. The Service Director assured the Committee that milestone measures would be implemented for every programme in the Corporate Plan and there would be figures for this for the Committee to examine at the next meeting.

Resolved:

(1) That the performance for Quarter 1 in relation to the Key Performance Indicators and Work Programmes within the Year 2 Action Plan of the Corporate Plan be noted.

24. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Chairman presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018/19.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Annual Report had been further revised following the Committee's meeting on 16 April 2019, taking account of the Committee's comments at that meeting and further consultation with the Chairmen of the Select Committees. The Committee was reminded that the report had been produced in accordance with Article 6 of the Constitution, which required an Annual Report to be submitted to the Council each year and was the fourteenth such report to be submitted under the current Scrutiny regime instigated in 2005. The Committee was requested to agree the report for submission to the Council at its meeting on 30 July 2019.

Resolved:

(1) That the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018/19, reporting the work undertaken during the past municipal year, be agreed for submission to the Council at its meeting on 30 July 2019.

25. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION - EPPING FOREST COLLEGE

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report concerning the scrutiny of Epping Forest College.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that the former Principal of Epping Forest College had attended the Committee on 27 February 2018 to report on the plans to improve the College's performance following its '*inadequate*' report from Ofsted. In August 2018, Epping Forest College had merged with New City College. An invitation was extended to the new Principal to attend the meeting scheduled for 3 September 2019, to report on the progress being made with the implementation of improvement plans, and to respond to the concerns of Members regarding the College's curriculum and its future intentions for its landholdings.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the new Principal, Ms Janet Smith, had responded and felt it was not appropriate for the College to report to the Council in this manner. The College was answerable to its own governing body and was open and transparent in its dealings with the public. However, the Principal added

that she would be happy to meet with Councillors to discuss the improvement at the College since the merger, but only on an informal basis, and would keep the Council informed on the development of the new Wellbeing & Leisure Centre.

Therefore, given the response from the Principal, it had been recommended that the external scrutiny of the College be removed from the Work Programme for the Committee for 2019/20. It had also been recommended that the Service Director for Communities & Partnerships should make arrangements for an informal briefing between the Principal and Members of the Committee. However, it was also suggested that the Service Director and the Chief Executive should meet with the Chief Executive of New City College prior to the Members meeting with the Principal of Epping Forest College.

Councillor Neville commented that it was unfortunate the Principal of the College felt she did not need to come before the Committee, especially as it was residents of the District which sent their children there to be educated. The previous Principal had attended although it was pleasing that an alternative offer had been made.

Councillor Murray also expressed his disappointment at the response from the Principal, as he felt there were some important issues at the College which required scrutiny. Local residents were very interested in the College's plans for their local landholdings. However, Councillor Murray also explained that the new Principal had a slightly different role with responsibility for just the curriculum and no other areas like finance and land holdings, unlike her predecessor. The College was also intending to focus on vocational qualifications in the future and would cease offering 'A' Levels. The Councillor felt that the College was improving with lower numbers of students increasing the quality. The Committee should pursue an informal briefing or meeting with the Principal, but the Councillor also supported the idea of a pre-meeting with the Chief Executive of New City College.

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that the Council had not formally responded to the Principal but would do so after this evening's meeting. Councillor Knight was disappointed with the response of the Principal, and suggested that a Member of the Committee could also be involved in the meeting with the Chief Executive of New City College. However, the Chairman felt that the discussion with the Chief Executive would be facilitated better if it was with Officers only, and that going through some informal meetings could build a relationship which would lead to attendance at formal meetings of the Committee in the future. The Committee was also reminded that a member of the Council sat on the College's governing body and reported back to the Council.

Councillor Sunger suggested that the Council should write to the Chairman of the College's governing body, as the Council also had the best interests of the College at heart; it was our residents that attended the College. However, the Chairman reminded the Committee that it did not have any powers to enforce external organisations to appear before it, and the Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that external organisations were advised, when invited to attend, that an adversarial approach was not taken by the Committee.

It was suggested that the Committee should visit the College as it had facilities to hold informal meetings, and the Councillors could get an idea of the facilities available at the College for students. However, the Committee felt that it should be left up to the Principal to decide the best venue for the meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the decision of the Joint Principal of the Epping Forest and Redbridge Campuses of New City College to not engage with the Council's proposed approach to external scrutiny of the ongoing improvement of further education services at the Epping Forest campus be noted;
- (2) That the proposed external scrutiny of Epping Forest College be removed from the Work Programme of the Committee for 2019/20;
- (3) That appropriate arrangements be made by the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships with the Joint Principal of the Epping Forest and Redbridge Campuses of New City College for Members to be advised of the progress with improvements at the Epping Forest Campus, by way of a Member briefing or visit to the College; and
- (4) That, prior to the meeting with the Joint Principal, arrangements be made by the Chief Executive and Service Director for Communities and Partnerships to meet with the Chief Executive of the New City College to informally discuss member concerns.

26. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20, including the Reserve List.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the first two items on the Work Programme were now complete, scrutiny of the Cabinet's Key Decisions were ongoing throughout the year, and the Customer Services item was an annual report presented to the Committee in March. The Committee had just agreed to remove the proposed scrutiny of Epping Forest College from the Work Programme for this year. For the next item, the review of the provision of local mental health services, a briefing for Officers had taken place this afternoon by the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust and one option was to repeat this briefing for Members before a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, possibly the next scheduled meeting in September. For the Local High Streets Viability & Regeneration item, the Service Director for Communities & Partnerships was considering the best way for this to be scrutinised, and the Economic Development Strategy was due to be considered by the Council at its next meeting on 30 July 2019. The scrutiny of Adult Social Care could also be scheduled for the next meeting in September as an invitation had already extended to Councillor Spence, who was the County Council Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care. The Committee would need to consider the scope of the scrutiny that they wished to undertake for this item. Finally, no proactive action was being undertaken for the scrutiny of the Epping Forest Sixth Form Consortium at the current time.

The Democratic Services Manager then presented the two items on the Reserve List, both of whom had been brought forward from the Reserve List last year. The scrutiny of the Joint Governance of the Essex Police / Essex Fire & Rescue Service could be added to the formal Work Programme.

Councillor Mohindra stated that he had been at the Officer Briefing this afternoon for the provision of local mental health services and felt that it was an excellent session. He suggested that if the scrutiny of Adult Social Care was undertaken as an informal training session then this would benefit the Committee more than a formal presentation followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairman commented that there was no external scrutiny currently planned for the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and suggested that there was an opportunity to invite Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust to the next meeting as a follow-on from the Officer briefing today. The Committee concurred, and the Democratic Services Manager undertook to speak to the relevant Officers to assess the feasibility of bringing that item to the next meeting.

The Chairman also highlighted that the viability and regeneration of local high streets was a national issue at the moment, as there had been recent programmes and articles on BBC Radio 4 and in the Daily Telegraph.

Resolved:

- (1) That the current Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20 be noted; and
- (2) That Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust be invited to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, on 3 September 2019, to brief Members on the provision of local mental health services.

27. MEMBER REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW - AIR POLLUTION FROM VEHICLE EMISSIONS

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that a Member request for a Scrutiny Review had been received from Councillor J H Whitehouse.

Councillor J H Whitehouse had requested a 'spotlight' Scrutiny review of air pollution caused by vehicle emissions, to: identify the locations of poor air quality in the District caused by vehicle emissions; learn how air quality was measured; and consider the measures available to the Council to address the problem. If this request was supported by the Committee then a scoping exercise would need to be undertaken and reported back to the Committee at its next meeting in September 2019.

Councillor Knight highlighted that the review could also examine the air quality from building developments throughout the District, but that there was currently no plan in place to resolve these issues and maybe this was not the right time for such a review. However, Councillor Neville felt that the review would be timely; the point being to examine what could be done to tackle this issue and then formulate a plan. The Council did have some powers to deal with this issue, whether it be through planning or dealing with idling traffic; other areas could be added during the scoping exercise if it was felt appropriate.

Councillor Murray was very supportive of the request and acknowledged that, although the Council could not do everything to improve the air quality within the District, it could do something. This review would be a start, was precisely worded, and would examine the measures and resources available to the Council before making its recommendations. Councillor Mohindra applauded the sentiment behind the request for a review, but wondered whether the District Council was the right body to undertake this review? Information on this subject might have already been collated by other public sector bodies.

However, the Portfolio Holder for Planning Services, Councillor Philip, felt that the request for a Scrutiny review was flawed. Air quality was a key part of the emerging Local Plan, particularly in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (2019). The air quality levels for the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the District were

higher than for the areas of human habitation. The Stronger Place Select Committee had scrutiny of the Local Plan within its remit, and this issue could be examined there; there was no need for a separate Task & Finish Panel.

Councillor J H Whitehouse acknowledged that air quality could be a wide topic, but she simply wanted a short, focused Task & Finish Panel to examine this subject. The Councillor had received numerous complaints about engine idling at Epping Underground Station, and Abridge was probably another area within the District with poor air quality due to traffic fumes. The Council had powers to issue fixed penalty notices but they were not used. There was the option to have follow-up Panels to tackle the other air quality issues.

Councillor Sunger, who was the Chairman of the Stronger Place Select Committee, pointed out that the '*Green Agenda*' was an item on the Select Committee's work programme and there was as yet nothing allocated against it. Therefore, the Councillor welcomed this as a topic for discussion at the Select Committee's next meeting in September 2019. Councillor Knight informed Councillor J H Whitehouse that she would be happy to attend the Select Committee meeting with her and together they could list all the air pollution issues within the District, not just traffic emissions. Councillor Philip reiterated that if there were particular air quality issues within the District then the Stronger Place Select Committee should be used to tackle them.

The Committee voted on the Member request for a Scrutiny Review, but the motion to set up a Task & Finish Panel to examine this issue was lost.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Member request for the establishment of a Task & Finish Panel to undertake a Scrutiny Review of air pollution caused by vehicle emissions not be agreed; and
- (2) That the matters raised by the Member Request be added to the current work programme for the Stronger Place Select Committee.

28. SELECT COMMITTEES - WORK PROGRAMMES

Councillor Knight introduced the Stronger Communities Work Programme for 2019/20. The Committee was reminded that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex was scheduled to attend the Select Committee's meeting on 1 October 2019, and all Members were urged to attend this meeting.

Councillor Sunger introduced the Stronger Place Select Committee Work Programme for 2019/20, and reassured the Committee that the issue of Air Quality within the District would be included under item 5 of the Work Programme – '*Green Agenda*' – following the earlier discussion on the Member Request for a Scrutiny review. Councillor Neville reminded the Committee that single use plastics had been proposed as a topic for discussion under the '*Green Agenda*' item as well.

Councillor Bolton introduced the Stronger Council Select Committee Work Programme for 2019/20, and cautioned the Committee that consideration of four topics at the last meeting had taken over four hours to complete – although this did include the review of polling places, polling districts and polling stations. Councillor Murray opined that the review of polling stations was conducted very well by the Committee. He had also met with the Head Teacher of White Bridge Primary School

in Loughton and had discussed with her the issues concerning the necessary use of the School as a polling station.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Work Programme for the Stronger Communities Select Committee be noted;
- (2) That the Work Programme for the Stronger Place Select Committee be noted;
and
- (3) That the Work Programme for the Stronger Council Select Committee be noted.

29. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee noted that there was no business which necessitated the exclusion of the public and press.

CHAIRMAN